1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
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methods of hunting, fishing, and gardening, &c., as well as consolidating my position and getting to know them more intimately. That they accepted me as a member of the community they showed when, on my return from a journey, they performed the appropriate ceremony for me as they would for one of themselves under like circumstances, and clinched it by saying: 'Now you really belong to us.' I received invitations from the people of several other villages to come and live with them. This was, of course, impossible in the time at my disposal, but whenever I paid them a short visit I was always received most hospitably.

In working among the women I took all the advantage I could of my sex, and although I found them less articulate than the men, they were, I feel sure, on much more intimate terms with me than they would have been with a man, besides admitting me to their huts during parturition, when all males are excluded. Among the men, however, it became a recognized convention to ignore the fact that I was a woman, and I was allowed to learn their secrets and to handle objects, such as the bull-roarer and the stone fish used in bonito magic, which are kept from sight and knowledge of their own womenfolk. Although I was careful to deserve their confidence, I do not think this prejudiced my position among the women at all, since it was understood that it was part of my work to know about the men as well as about themselves.

I often accompanied my native friends on their journeys and thus became acquainted with the greater part of Buka and its associated islets, the whole length of the north coast of Bougainville, and portions of the mountainous hinterland. Between the inhabitants of Buka and those of the north coast of Bougainville there is at the present time, and probably always has been, close social contact, including frequent intermarriage. As will be seen in the chapters that follow, the structure of their society, their clans and their kinship system, are fundamentally the same, and allowing for local variations, there seems sufficient resemblance to indicate that this whole area may be considered as a cultural unit. It extends down the east coast of Bougainville as far as Numanuma, and down the west coast for a shorter distance, the limits of which I was unable to determine exactly. The Hahon people (Wawon in the Kurtatchi dialect, which has no *h* sound) inhabiting the foothills behind the northern shore do not intermarry with the coast people, with perhaps some rare exceptions, and in their intercourse

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there still remain traces of the hostility that formerly prevailed. There would appear to be some affinity, both in language and in culture, between these two groups, but the slight amount of contact I had with the Hahon people was insufficient to enable me to classify them exactly. The Kunua people, inhabiting the north-central highlands and a portion of the coast about twenty miles south of its north-western corner, differ so much, both in customs and in language, from the people among whom I lived, that even a short visit was enough to indicate that they should probably be considered as a separate cultural entity. The coast folk are still very much afraid of the Kunua people, though there is no longer open warfare between them. They meet but rarely, chiefly on ceremonial occasions, such as those connected with the adolescent boys. These meetings are always characterized by a noticeable feeling of tension.

This book is primarily concerned with the people of the north coast of Bougainville, particularly its western half. With certain exceptions, discussed in their appropriate context, most of the information here given also holds good of the people of Buka, except in so far as changes have been introduced there by contact with whites. Since there are local differences, not due to white influence, I have been careful to give, in all cases, the exact locality from which each piece of information was obtained. Data concerning the provenance of which nothing is said, were collected at Kurtatchi from inhabitants of that village.

The culture of these people is disappearing with increasing rapidity, and their ideas on every subject are being changed day by day through contact with those of our own civilization. It therefore seemed imperative to make my investigation cover as much of their lives as possible. Though the information I have gathered is necessarily affected by the limitations imposed both by time and by my personal predilections and training, I have tried to put on record the most outstanding features of a *modus vivendi* which will, for better or for worse, in a very short time have been altered beyond recognition or recall.

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197 vocabulary, so much so that my Petats servant, a man of rather over the average of local intelligence, was unable at first to understand it, and carried on his converse with the Kurtatchi people in pidgin-English. He picked it up, however, in the course of a short time. This dialect is spoken also in the villages of Baniu and Timputs, farther along the coast of Bougainville to the east, and in one hamlet of Tabut, the next village on the west. The other hamlets of Tabut, the villages between Tabut and Buka Passage, and the village of Ruri, about four miles from Kurtatchi on its eastern side, speak dialects much more closely resembling those of the east coast of Buka, particularly that of the Hanahan district. The Hanahan dialect seems to be at least partially intelligible to many, if not most, of the people of the North Bougainville coast, and is used by the Roman Catholic Mission for their services.

The small amount of linguistic evidence available as regards the dialect spoken in the Kunua mountain district suggests that it belongs to a separate group altogether. Mr. Ray thinks that it may be regarded as Papuan. It is completely unintelligible to the coast natives, as are the coastal dialects to the Kunua people. [648] Failure to comprehend each other's speech has probably always been an important factor in the attitude of hostility, now subsided into thinly veiled suspicion, which is traditional between the coast dwellers and the people of the central mountains, who, when investigated, will, I feel sure, prove to differ in many important cultural respects from the people described in the present volume, although they associate with them in certain matters, notably in the boys' puberty ceremonies.

197 621 With this exception, the linguistic differences are not sufficient to prove a bar to inter-communication between the various villages, though a closer connexion is maintained between villages speaking similar dialects. The custom of taking wives from outside the [582 591 604] home village links them together, especially as a married couple will frequently reside now in one, now in the other, of their respective homes, and the children will be sent to stay for long periods in the household of their mother's brother. Communication between villages is also established by means of meetings for [438] barter, which is carried on even where relations are not otherwise especially friendly.

484 624 Considering the difficulty of travel, which must all be done either on foot or by canoe, the natives range over quite a large area. For

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It was always made clear that the taboo on knowing about these things did not apply to me, as a white woman, but only to the women of their own people, so I have no reason to think that anything was purposely concealed.

A boy usually goes through the *wapi* ceremony at the age of about eight or nine, judging from the size of the younger of those wearing it (Pl. 20 *a*). But if there is a shortage of food and no ceremony is being held, or if his family are unable to take their share in providing the necessary payments, both in ceremonial currency and in food, his participation may be delayed until he is a good deal older. Some children undergo it still younger, but if, on being sent to the bush for the seclusion preceding the ceremony, they cry for their mothers, they are sent back to wait for a subsequent occasion. One small boy at Kurtatchi who had been thus sent home was only about seven at the time of my visit, though the *wapi* had been held some time back. The *upi* which had been prepared for him was hidden in the bush, where it still remained when the account was given to me. As a rule, every boy from those about nine up to those almost arrived at young manhood (Pl. 20 *b*) will be found wearing the hat. The decision as to whether a boy shall put on the hat at a forthcoming *wapi* ceremony rests with the boy's father, and depends partly upon whether he possesses the necessary length of ceremonial currency (*imun*) which he must pay to one of the old men of *tsunaun* rank to make the boy an *upi*. This man must not be a member of the boy's lineage.

The *wapi* ceremony is preceded by a period of seclusion in the depths of the bush. The day upon which the boys must go to the bush is fixed at the discretion of the *tsunaun tʃan*, that is, the leading man of rank in the group of villages concerned, who will arrange it when a suitable number of candidates is available. The time spent in seclusion is called *wawilbē*. It used to last for a year, as far as I could ascertain, but of late has been cut down to about three months, owing, they say, to the fact that the District Officer does not like the boys to be absent when he comes round to inspect the village, to line the people up for payment of head-tax, and so on. One of the District Officers told me that he was sometimes asked to give permission for the boys to be absent from such a roll-call for three months, and to ask any other officers who might be visiting the village not to require their presence; this he was willing to do.

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[1] Our knowledge of the Solomon Islanders is rather sparse even today. Up to the present the most valuable contributions have been made by H. B. Guppy, The Salomon Islands and their Natives (1887) and C. M. Woodford, A Naturalist Among the Head-hunters (1890); but even these two did not have the opportunity to become acquainted with the extreme northwestern islands of Buka and Bougainville. On its voyage the "Gazelle" touched the west coast of Bougainville on the twenty-fifth of August 1875; since that time merchants have frequently visited the island, in part to make purchases and in part to recruit workers for plantations in other areas. On these occasions bloody conflicts frequently arose between the natives and the whites so that the former have gained the reputation of being a warlike and cruel people. I believe, however, that this reputation is unmerited. It cannot be denied that quite a few white men in Bougainville have been slain by the natives; but frequently we must acknowledge that the death of a great many of them was caused by their own misdeeds. The recruiting of plantation workers with its many evil consequences has nevertheless had one advantage. A large number of the natives have seen other regions, become acquainted with other circumstances, and come to comprehend the character of the white man better. Thereby, in the course of the years, a transformation has taken place in their mutual relationships; even if one party cannot meet the other with absolute confidence, still a certain armed neutrality has been brought about by means of which a rather calm and peaceful relationship is gradually being built up.

The following statements on the ethnography of the northwestern Solomon Islands (Buka, Bougainville, the islands of the Bougainville Strait) including Carteret and Nissan Islands (1) are the result of

1. Both of these island groups must be considered as belonging ethnographically to Buka, Bougainville, and the islands of the Bougainville Strait. The Carteret Islands were populated by natives from Buka about

both large and small. On the whole they treat their women well and share with them the labors of field work. I could cite a great number of examples proving that they do not always kill everyone who lands on their island voluntarily or involuntarily. On the east side of the islands it frequently happens that people from Ongtang Java, from the Gilbert Islands or from other groups situated to the east are blown off their course and land there; many of these are traded off for a small present to ships that occasionally pass by and others establish a new home there. In the year 1896, on the west coast, I met nine natives from the Trobriand Group (on the coast of New Guinea). They had been driven in their boat all the way to the little island of Saposa on the northwest end of Bougainville and had been individually adopted into the families; they were getting along so well that I succeeded only after long debate in persuading them to come on board so as to be sent to their homeland. In 1885 an American had settled with some other whites on an island in the King Albert Strait between Buka and Bougainville. The man appears to have been an unbearable fellow; several of his comrades left him in a boat and, after a long journey, landed on the island of Nusa at the north end of New Mecklenburg; only one endured it for some time, but then also left him with the aid of the natives; the latter at first kept him for a time in Hanahan on the east coast of northern Buka and then brought him overland to Carola Harbor. From there he got to New Pomerania [New Britain] with a ship that had docked there. The man asserted that during his almost three month long stay among the natives he had always been treated in a friendly and hospitable manner and never had the feeling that he was in a particularly dangerous situation. The old chieftain Gorai in the Shortland Group saved many a white from death. When at the beginning of the eighties a German schooner from Apia (Samoa) was stranded on a neighboring island and Gorai found out that the white crew was in great danger, he assembled his people, manned a number of his large boats, and went to aid the endangered whites. For a long time afterwards they were his guests until they had the opportunity to get to Mioko in the Bismarck Archipelago. On another occasion a merchant schooner from Australia had struck a coral reef in the Shortland Islands. Gorai was away, and some less favorably disposed islanders planned to kill the crew of the ship and steal the cargo. But Gorai came home

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unexpectedly and immediately went on board, where his people proposed the plan to him. In his laconic manner he answered: "Good! Do what you want to, but I am on the side of the white men." Obviously the hostile venture did not come to pass, and with the aid of Gorai and the islanders who had recently been so hostilely disposed, they succeeded [5] in setting their schooner afloat again. A favorite expression of the old man was: "To be sure, I have a black skin, but my heart is white." When he died in 1894 one of his last commands was that no slaves be killed after his death--a custom that even today is still practiced in Bougainville and on the Shortland Islands upon the death of a chieftain. A few years ago I was lying at anchor in the little Baniu Bay on the north coast of Bougainville. A great part of the coastal people was absent, as I found out, on a war expedition against the mountain people. On the following morning the whole group, about fifty men, came back and brought along as a prisoner of war a man who was carrying a child about a year old in his arms. Upon interrogation it turned out that, farther inland, they had surprised a number of natives who were quietly working on a plantation; men as well as women had hastily taken flight, and they had not succeeded in taking any prisoners. Since, however, the inland villages had now been alarmed, they gave up their war expedition and retreated to the previously mentioned plantation to pass the night there. During the night they had heard a slight noise and, suspecting an attack by the mountain people, had carefully kept watch; they saw a single man who walked forward, looking around cautiously, until, having reached a banana tree, he picked up a child and then just as cautiously started out on his way back. He and the child had then been silently surrounded and captured. The child had been forgotten by its mother during the hasty flight. When it was finally missed, the father had returned, despite the risks connected with it, to seek and save his offspring in the hiding place known to him; he was more than a little surprised when I bought him free with a few articles and he was told he could return home safely--which he hastily did.

These examples, I believe, suffice to demonstrate that despite cannibalism and other not particularly gentle customs and practices, the northern Solomon Islanders on the whole are not so cruel and wild as they have been otherwise described. They contrast very favorably in comparison with the inhabitants of the other islands of the archipelago, especially with the notorious headhunters of Vella Lavella and New Georgia. To be sure, feuds of greater and lesser duration are not infrequent among neighboring tribes, especially between the coast inhabitants and the mountain dwellers, but on the other South Sea Islands quite similar conditions prevail and it occurs to

no one to regard their people as exceedingly cruel for this reason. The Christian Samoans have been waging war among themselves almost continually for years, and even if they do not eat their prisoners of war, they do cut off their heads; despite this they have the reputation of being a kind and good-natured people. When our German government acquired colonies in the Western Pacific, it was certainly an extremely good move to include the northwestern Solomon Islands in the realm of the new colony. Specifically the natives of these islands have, up until now, turned out well as members of the small defensive army in the Bismarck Archipelago. Just as they have proven themselves loyal and reliable as plantation workers, they have also often won the praise of their leaders on the frequently very laborious and dangerous expeditions against natives in the archipelago.

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Tribal Government

As is the case everywhere in the Solomon Islands, the honor of being chieftain is hereditary. The oldest son is not always his father's successor; if the father has several sons, he names one as his heir, as a rule to be sure, the eldest.

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Every village has its own chieftain who, strictly speaking, rules his own little realm himself; however, weaker chieftains frequently ally themselves with neighboring chieftains in an offensive and defensive alliance against neighboring enemies. Chieftains who have at their command a large number of warriors not infrequently compel weaker neighboring chieftains into a sort of vassalage, but the weaker one's duties seem to consist solely in accompanying the stronger one on war expeditions and supporting him with his men; in return he can always count on the protection of the stronger chieftain. The deceased Gorai in Shortland had established such an extended vassalage, which comprised the southern half of Bougainville, all the islands of the Bougainville Strait, and the north end of Choiseul. He was looked upon as the reigning chieftain, and no one dared to undertake anything against his will. After Gorai's death this league disintegrated, and since the deceased was a prudent man and very favorably disposed towards the whites, the peaceful conditions created by him are in danger of gradual collapse. On Buka the tribes around Carola Harbor and the opposite east coast of Hanahan are allied against those on the island's north cape and on the mountainous south end of Zoloss. In Bougainville exactly the same sort

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